



January 10, 2025

Dear Flemington-Raritan Regional School District Parents, Staff, and Community Members,

Happy New Year to all of our students, staff members, families, and community members! We are delighted to see our students back in school and we look forward to continued success in the remainder of our school year.

During the Winter Break, the Board of Education and administrative team continued efforts to address our budget crisis. I wrote about our budget situation in previous letters, linked [here](#) and [here](#). As a reminder, all budget information shared to date is linked [here](#). I held meetings with our building principals and district administrators. I talked with Board leadership and worked with our Executive County Superintendent to finalize a resolution to ask the public for approval to increase the budget above the 2% cap.

At the January 6, 2025 meeting, the Board of Education unanimously passed a resolution to ask voters to approve a special budget question. A public vote will be held on March 11, 2025. Polls will be open from 6 AM to 8 PM.

What's the special question?

Voters will be asked to approve an increase to the Flemington-Raritan School District budget by an additional 4% above the statutory 2% cap. That's a 6% total increase of \$2,388,749 beginning in the 2025-2026 school year. These additional funds will maintain 30 teachers and staff members; Class III Officers; and J.V. sports at J.P. Case Middle School.

Various percentage increases were considered, including 4%, 6%, and 8%. You may recall that we asked for community input on these percentages in a recent budget poll. Using the feedback received and considering recommendations from our Business Administrator, a 6% increase to the budget was determined to be the most cost-effective amount that allows the district to maintain as many instruction-based staff members and programs as possible while being fiscally responsible with taxpayer funding.

Even if this special question is approved by voters, a budget shortfall remains. **An additional \$1 million must be cut to balance the budget. Among the line items being considered, administrators will be reduced regardless of the outcome of the public vote on this special budget question.**

How much will the special question cost if approved by voters?

Approval of the special question will result in a permanent increase in the district's tax levy. For the 2025-2026 school year, taxes will go up:

- \$5 a month for a Flemington Borough home assessed at \$400,000
- \$32 a month for a Raritan Township home assessed at \$600,000.

*The cost to the taxpayers is an estimated amount as we are still awaiting the release of the 2025 ratables and average home-assessed values from the Tax Assessor's office for Flemington Borough and Raritan Township.

What if the special question fails?

If the special question isn't approved, the following will be cut from the 2025-2026 budget:

- 25 teachers that preserve small class sizes (17-24 students) in the elementary schools and support specialized reading programs, such as elementary reading recovery; reading and math support in the intermediate and middle schools; and instruction in all support classes;
- 5 teachers that deliver G&T/STEM instruction;

Strategic Goals:

Goal Area #1: The District will provide a comprehensive and rigorous educational experience that connects and expands students' knowledge while engaging and empowering all learners to synthesize and apply their skills and understandings in meaningful ways.

Goal Area #2: Develop a continuation of a multi-tiered system of support within the district to target the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students.

Goal Area #3: The district will create opportunities to foster unity between the community and the school district in order to strengthen partnerships and develop a shared responsibility for student success.

Goal Area #4: Create an enticing and competitive work environment to attract and retain high-quality candidates representative of students' diverse backgrounds in the Flemington Raritan Regional School District community.

Goal Area #5: Ensure the finance and facilities needs are budgeted to upkeep and meet the needs of the growing district.



- 6 Class III Officers, one in each building;
- Junior varsity sports and athletic clubs at J.P. Case Middle School, including softball, volleyball, field hockey, cross-country, soccer, lacrosse, wrestling, basketball, cheerleading, and baseball.

What's next?

The next budget Town Hall meetings will be held in person on Monday, January 27, from 6-7:30 PM at J.P. Case Middle School. The community can also attend virtually with this Zoom [link](#) (Webinar ID: 873 9532 7021 and code: 066752). Click this event flyer [link](#) for details. A third Town Hall will be held on Wednesday, February 26.

In addition, I continue to advocate at state and federal levels for an improved school funding formula. I recently attended a School Funding Regional Hearing on January 8. During the session, I spoke up and out about how inadequate funding severely impacts our district. Representatives from other New Jersey school districts voiced their concerns too and echoed similar sentiments, namely ongoing issues with the unfair school funding formula from the New Jersey Department of Education, school budgets, PILOT programs, transportation costs, inflation, national teacher shortages, increases in contractual salaries, special education costs, and more. FRSD is not alone in our funding situation; a similar burden is shared by many districts across the state that face the same challenges.

Our Frequently Asked Questions document, [linked](#), provides responses to common questions as well as questions raised at Town Hall meetings. The document will be updated regularly, so please check back often. If you have questions, please be sure to email them to budget@frsd.us.

For more information:

- View the [Town Hall #2](#) flyer.
- Check our [Budget Webpage](#).
- Email questions to budget@frsd.us.

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to our school district and student success.

Sincerely,

Kari McGann, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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